

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE
IN
LAW ENFORCEMENT

A Project
Presented to
POST
Command College

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CLASS #1

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This Command College Independent Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future but rather to project a number of possible scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future--creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College project are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Did you ever wonder what it would take to make an excellent police department? Well, I did. As a student of the POST Command College, I was given the opportunity to research this question.

I was inspired by the best seller, In Search of Excellence, by Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., in which they described eight attributes of corporate excellence. I was sure if certain attributes were necessary to achieve excellence in the private sector, then there must be certain dimensions that would be present to achieve excellence in law enforcement. This study was conducted to try and identify those dimensions that would make a police department excellent.

This venture was approached in a positive light. True, we can all learn from the mistakes of others; however, I was not as concerned with problem avoidance as I was with achieving maximum potential. The timing seems right for such a project since the current managing trend is towards seeking excellence.

A total of 24 executives were interviewed, 11 Chiefs of Police, 4 retired Chiefs of Police, 4 City Managers, 1 Sheriff, and 3 Law Enforcement Consultants. All interviews were restricted to California as I felt if excellence existed I would surely find it in California. After analyzing the data from the interviews, it was the consensus view that eight attributes have to be present before an agency can achieve excellence. It was also apparent that excellence was doing all eight dimensions as they are all inter-related.

The eight dimensions are as follows:

- o Doing the basics right,
- o Leadership,
- o Missions and goals,
- o Values are clear,
- o Innovation,
- o Caring,
- o Staying close to the community, and
- o Organizational technologies.

In addition to the necessary attributes to achieve excellence, the interviewees felt there were ways to strive for excellence. This includes the following:

- o It's up to the leader,
- o Presenting the right image,
- o They have a mission and goals,
- o They take care of the details,
- o They take care of their people,
- o There is always something going on, and
- o They are responsive to the community.

One conclusion that can be drawn from this project is that excellence does not mean perfection. Excellent agencies will readily admit their mistakes and ask for help if needed. There is no magic formula to be followed. No special training or equipment is needed. Any department that wish to attain excellence can do so. This is not to insinuate that I have found the answers to achieving

excellence, for such a claim would be foolish. There may be no right or wrong approach to achieving excellence. I do believe the findings make sense, and I offer the report for contemplation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank all the people whose cooperation made this research work possible. I especially want to thank my research advisor Dr. Reuben Harris who not only advised me on the research methodology, but gave me great support and encouragement. I am grateful to Chief Karel Swanson, Walnut Creek Police Department, who also was one of my research advisors and kept me inspired. Thanks to my boss, Michael DiMiceli for his great support, time, travel, and the opportunity to bounce many ideas around with him while putting this project together. Special thanks to our secretary, Marie Bouvia, for all the typing and retyping on this paper. I appreciate the help of Kay Fong for assisting in the graphics. Thanks too, to the guys I work with, Jim McArthur, Bob Fuller, and Bobby Sadler, for their input on this project. Many thanks to my wife, Janelle, who devoted her time to help edit this report.

Listed below are the people that were interviewed, and I appreciate their time and contribution to this project. And lastly, I want to thank a lot of unnamed people who talked with me about this project. These unnamed people inspired lots of ideas and confirmed a lot of thoughts, and I thank them. Special thanks to POST for giving me the opportunity to attend the POST Command College.

People Interviewed:

- o Thomas Anderson, Consultant, previously Undersheriff, County of Sonoma, CA.
- o Joe Baker, Consultant, Retired City Manager, City of Orange, CA.
- o Robert Bobb, City Manager, City of Santa Ana, CA.
- o Gary Brown, Consultant, Retired Chief of Police, City of San Clemente, CA.
- o Robert Christofferson, City Manager, City of Fresno, CA.
- o Elwin E. "Ted" Cooke, Chief of Police, City of Culver City, CA.
- o Michael DiMiceli, Bureau Chief, Commission on POST, Management Counseling Services Bureau, Sacramento, CA.
- o Raymond W. Forsyth, Chief of Police, City of Visalia, CA.
- o Jack Garner, City Manager and Former Chief of Police, City of Martinez, CA.
- o George T. Hart, Chief of Police, City of Oakland, CA.
- o Richard Hughes, Consultant, Hughes, Hughes, Heiss and Associates, San Mateo, CA.

- o Francis Kessler, Chief of Police, City of Garden Grove, CA.
- o Ed Kreins, City Manager and former Chief of Police, City of Beverly Hills, CA.
- o Kelson McDaniel, Chief of Police, City of San Clemente, CA.
- o Gerald McNamara, Chief of Police, City of Menlo Park, CA.
- o Joseph McNamara, Chief of Police, City of San Jose, CA.
- o Leo E. Peart, Chief of Police, City of Irvine, CA.
- o Charles Plummer, Chief of Police, City of Hayward, CA.
- o Karel A. Swanson, Chief of Police, City of Walnut Creek, CA.
- o Charles R. Thayer, Chief of Police, City of Tustin, CA.
- o Norm Traub, Consultant, Retired Chief of Police, City of Orange, CA.
- o Paul Wisenand, Consultant, PMW Associates, San Clemente, CA.
- o Lynn Wood, Sheriff, County of Stanislaus, CA.
- o James C. Zurcher, Chief of Police, City of Palo Alto, CA.

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EXCELLENCE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT?

Did you ever wonder what it would take to make an excellent police department? Well, I did. As a student of the POST Command College, I was given the opportunity to research this question.

I was inspired by the best seller, In Search of Excellence, by Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., in which they described eight attributes of corporate excellence. I was sure if certain attributes were necessary to achieve excellence in the private sector, then there must be certain dimensions that would be present to achieve excellence in the law enforcement culture. This study was conducted to try and identify those dimensions that would make a police department excellent.

This venture was approached in a positive light. True, we can all learn from the mistakes of others; however, I was not as concerned with problem avoidance as I was with achieving maximum potential. Hopefully, this information can provide a road map for achieving excellence, and it can be incorporated into training programs preparing tomorrow's law enforcement leaders.

The timing seems right for such a project since the current managing trend is towards seeking excellence. In John Naisbitt's book, Re-Inventing the Corporation, he says, "We are living in one of those rare times in history when the two crucial elements for social change are present, new values and economic necessity.¹" So, let's jump on the "band wagon." Everything seems to be in place to make necessary changes to strive for excellence.

¹Naisbitt, John and Aburdene, Patricia, Re-Inventing The Corporation, Warner Books, N.Y., N.Y. 1985, (pp 12).

CHAPTER 1

SEARCHING FOR THE ANSWER

1.1 How Was It Done?

The current literature on excellence was reviewed in order to prepare for the interviews with leading law enforcement executives. The most difficult task was selecting the people to be interviewed. The law enforcement community has so many really qualified executives that it was impossible to talk to everyone who could contribute to this project. Therefore, a selection process was developed to determine and identify a number of people to be interviewed.

An attempt was made to interview a small sampling of top executives who were experienced, either in managing or had managed a police department with a good reputation; were involved in the law enforcement circles; and represented a variety of sizes of police departments from all over the state. I discussed this project with many of my associates and asked who they thought I should interview. In addition, I asked the people interviewed who else they suggest I interview. The interviews were restricted to Chiefs of Police, Sheriffs, City Managers, and POST Law Enforcement Consultants as we wanted to find out how they would determine an excellent police department.

I interviewed twenty-four Executives, eleven Chiefs of Police and four retired Chiefs of Police, four City Managers, one Sheriff, and three Law Enforcement Consultants. Everyone had over twenty years of experience and most had been in their present position more than five years. All of the retired Chiefs are currently law enforcement consultants. Most of the interviewees had experience in more than one agency.

All interviews were restricted to California executives since POST represents California Law Enforcement; also, time did not allow for extensive out-of-state travel. And, lastly, I was sure that if excellence existed in police agencies I would surely find it in California.

1.2 Preparing for the Interviews

Peters and Waterman in the book, In Search of Excellence, stated that "any intelligent approach to organizing had to encompass, and treat as inter-dependent, at least seven variables: structure, strategy, people, management style, systems and procedures, guiding concepts and shared values (i.e., culture), and the present and hoped for organization strengths or skills." With further clarification and refinement they made all seven variables begin with letter "S" and thus developed the McKinsey 7 S Model as depicted in Figure 1, following this page.

The McKinsey 7 S Model became the blueprint for this project. The interviews were designed to help the executive to at least address these

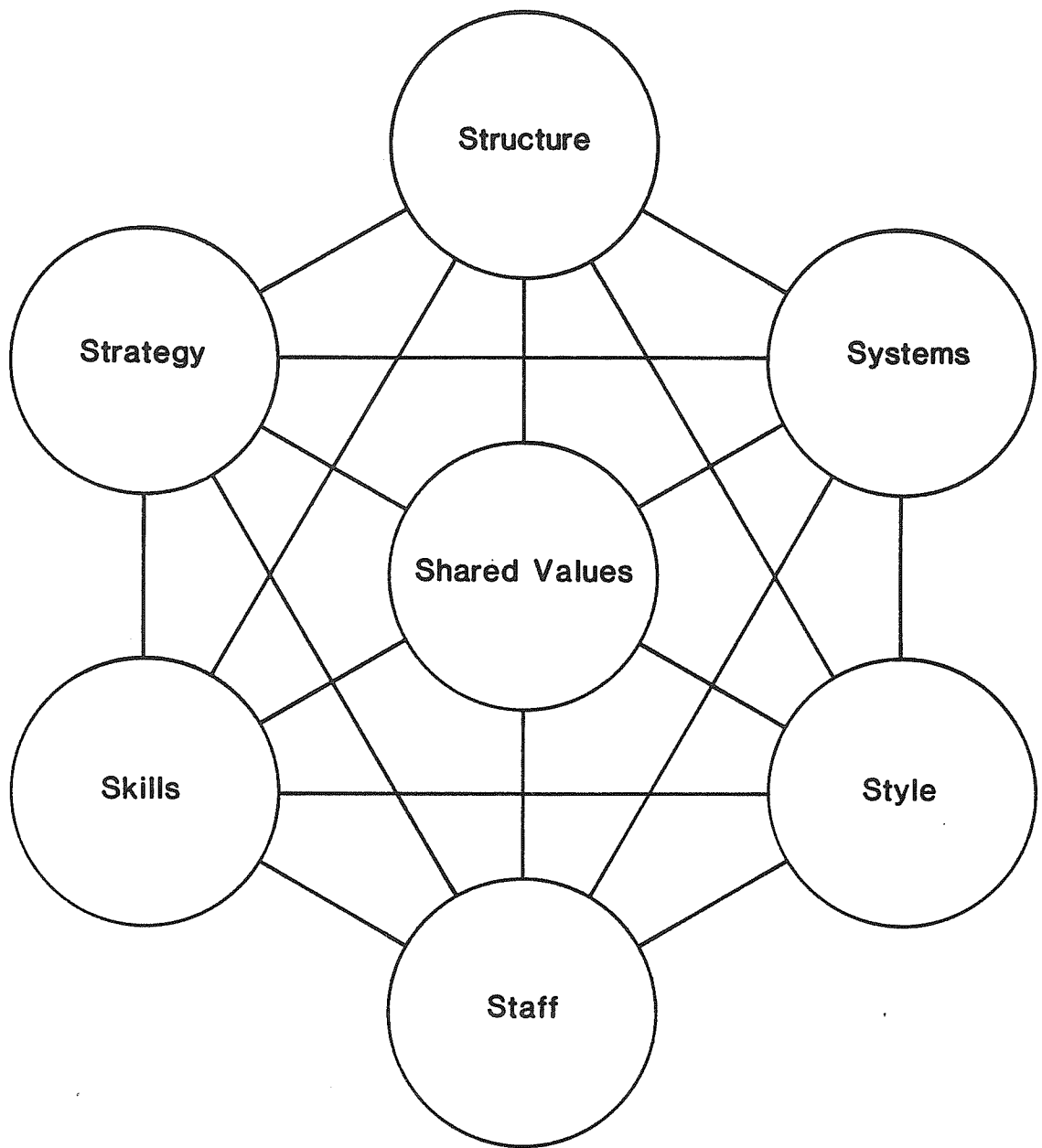


Figure 1: The McKinsey 7 S Model

variables. The interview questions were designed to be very broad so the executive could expand as he saw appropriate.

Prior to the actual interview, each executive was asked two pre-interview questions. One, what would make a police department the best in California? And, two, what would you see if you visited it? Questions that were asked in the interview were as follows:

- o Think about an excellent police department.
 - What characteristics could you review from your office which might indicate that this department is excellent?
 - What would you look for if you visited it?
 - What things can one do to make a police department excellent?

Other questions were asked if clarification was necessary. Finally, they were asked to nominate agencies and/or chiefs of police and sheriffs that they thought were excellent or striving for excellence. Hopefully, in another project, these agencies can be visited to: 1) see if they are achieving excellence, and 2) verify the dimensions presented in this project.

1.3 Establishing The Dimensions

All twenty-four executives mentioned similar attributes found in an excellent police department. A matrix was developed to identify the important dimensions necessary for an excellent police department.

First, I narrowed the attributes into 13 categories. They were: Innovation, Basics, Image, Mission/Goals, Values, Leadership, Community, Teamwork, Organization, Employees, Training, Discipline, Recruit/Selection, Politics, Delegation of Authority, Communicate, Attitudes and Vision. I listed these attributes and the people interviewed on a matrix and analyzed the most mentioned attributes (see chart on next page). I listed the attributes mentioned on the vertical plane of the matrix and gave each person interviewed a number across the top axis of the matrix. The dots represents the attributes the executives specifically mentioned as important. I am sure that if I went back to the executives and asked about the attributes they did not specifically mention, they would tell me these are also necessary. All 18 attributes were considered important; therefore, I combined like characteristics into major classifications which are highlighted on the matrix.

The attributes were then combined into like qualities and placed in the categories that were designated the most important by the executives interviewed. The final eight dimensions that best described what would be necessary to achieve excellence in the police department were: Leadership, Values, Mission/Goals, Innovation, Basics, Employees, Community, and Organization Technologies. The concepts expressed by those interviewed are necessary ingredients in an excellent department.

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Executives Interviewed

Attributes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Total Times Mentioned
Innovation	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	21
Basics	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	21
Image	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	23
Mission/Goals	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	22
Values	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	24
Leadership	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	24
Community	●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		19
Teamwork	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	19
Organization						●				●						●		●					●	●	7
Employees	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	23
Training	●	●		●		●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	19
Discipline	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●							●	●	●		19
Recruit/Select	●		●	●			●	●			●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	17
Politics		●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		16
Delegate	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●								●	●				●		13
Communicate	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	23
Attitude		●			●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●				●	●	17
Vision		●			●	●	●				●	●				●	●	●	●			●	●	●	11

Chart 1.

1.4 Search for Excellence

"The definition of a good police department is one that isn't bad."² If there is no corruption, scandals, etc., then this department must be okay. Maybe that's true, but how does one know for sure? In addition, it is the consensus of the people interviewed that not only is there a difference between a good police department and one that isn't, there is a difference between good departments and excellent ones. In this chapter, I will describe how law enforcement leaders evaluate the police to determine excellence.

1.5 What Do They Look For?

Did you ever wonder how the law enforcement leaders, city managers, and consultants gauge whether or not your department was excellent? Well, I did, so I asked them. Two gauges are used: one, they can view some things from their office, and the other, when they actually visit the department.

All of the interviewees indicated that when assessing any police department, certain aspects would be present that could assist in the evaluation of that department. However, just because the agency did these things would not necessarily make it excellent. The excellent department, however, would receive high marks in these areas. Collectively, they stated that prior to any on-site visit they would want to look at the following:

- o Mission Statement: Do they have one? Is it written? Can it be articulated? They felt that a mission statement can tell you a lot about the style of the department.³
- o Goals and objectives: Are they written, obtainable, and reasonably high standards? They represent the department's blueprint.
- o Policies and Procedures: Are they written, contemporary, and articulated?
- o Selection Standards: Are they doing the best they can to get the best qualified people available? Are they complying with the law?

²Interview with Chief Joseph McNamara, San Jose Police Department 11/19/85.

³O.W. Wilson described the three styles of Policing as Watchmen, Legalistic, and Service.

- o Statistics: Practically all of the executives interviewed indicated that statistics do not make the excellent police department. They doubt, however, if you would find an excellent department without good arrest and clearance rates, traffic index, and high officer activity levels. They stated that if statistics are low, morale is probably low. It's not the figures that count, but if the department is doing its job, the figures will be good.
- o Evaluations: Do they do them? Are they job related? And, are they goal oriented? Evaluations should be used not only to improve employee performance but also the department.
- o Grievances: What kind are they? How are they handled? Are they processed in a timely manner according to agreed-upon procedures?
- o Citizen Complaint System: How many? How are they handled? What are they? What are the dispositions? We are judged by how we handle the problems that are perceived by the community.
- o Law Suits: What are they? What is the final outcome?
- o Disciplinary Actions: What are they? How many? How are they handled? Discipline should be swift and sure, without procedural flaws.
- o Organization Chart: Almost all of the executives felt you could tell a lot about a department through its organizational chart. You could tell where they emphasize their resources, and if they were as lean as they could be trying to reduce the layers of communications. The excellent departments would have as few layers of management and supervisors that they could possibly have.

Although the facts reveal a great deal, the executives interviewed all agreed that to accurately assess an organization, a visit was necessary. The kind of things they would be looking for are:

- o Pride of Officers: From the chief down, the officers would look good. They would, on the whole, be in good physical condition, wear clean and neat uniforms, be well groomed, have good equipment, and have a "look sharp, be sharp" attitude.
- o Facilities: The facilities and the equipment would be clean, neat, and pleasing to the eye. If

not, "are they trying to do something about it?" The excellent police departments would always be trying to improve their facilities.

- o People: In the excellent departments, one would find busy people helping each other, and lots of interaction among the employees. There would be a lot of good humor and people having fun. There would be a lack of "back biting" and small cliques. The employees would be loyal, creative, and content.
- o Organization: The department would be organized, effective, efficient, and financially responsible. They would have good personnel practices, treat their employees fairly and have good equipment and training. They would respect the contribution of the employee. The meet and confer process would not only follow the proper procedures, but it would be done in a friendly respectful manner.

1.6 Findings

Many of the judgments in this paper are based on intangibles. They come from feelings, experiences, beliefs, and perceptions of the people who were interviewed, and they represent a cross section of those opinions.

Although, no magic formula for creating excellence was found, the key seemed to be how you used what you already knew to be true. I did find, however, that if you don't do the basics well, you're not going to have an excellent department. An encouraging fact was that achieving excellence was possible for anyone.

1.7 Excellence Is Not Being Perfect

One of the things that became very clear while researching this project was that excellence did not equal perfection. In fact, the excellent agencies will readily admit their mistakes. And, when help is needed, they ask for it. They do, however, run consistently well. The excellent agency can be counted on to do the best possible job regardless of the circumstances.

CHAPTER 2

EXCELLENCE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT: A CONSENSUS VIEW

After analyzing the many attributes of excellence in law enforcement, there were eight major dimensions that emerged which characterize most nearly the distinction of an excellent police department. This chapter will address each of these dimensions.

2.1 Doing The Basics Right

Everyone agreed that the excellent police department would have to perform the basic functions well and do them right the first time. If the department does not perform the basic police role such as answering calls-for-service, patrolling, protecting life and property, and writing good police reports, it would in the opinion of those interviewed, be practically impossible for a police department to achieve excellence. It's the little things being done right that builds foundations. The major problems seem to handle themselves. We are trained for major events and we dedicate a lot of resources to handle these problems when they arise. The excellent police agencies would be sure the day-to-day basic police duty is performed at the highest standard possible. As one police chief said, "if you can't answer the patrol calls in a timely efficient manner, then it makes little difference how well you do during crisis; the public will judge you on the normal routine calls." Another chief said, "you have to provide services to the citizen because all calls are important to the victim." The public expects the police to respond to the major event, and they will even excuse you if you mess it up, but, the police better handle the routine calls fast, efficiently, and effectively because that's what the community expects.

Being excellent is paying attention to the details. It's the little things like making sure police reports are complete and correct, having plans and standard operating procedures, maintaining high standards and proper discipline. It's practicing the Golden Rule⁴ with everybody (citizen and fellow employee); it's being technically efficient (getting the most bang for your bucks); having and maintaining the best equipment available. As one police chief said, "excellence is making sure the portable radios work and there are plenty of batteries for the flashlights. It's keeping the typewriters in good working order and not running out of citation books."

⁴Treating others as you want to be treated.

Being excellent is where everyone knows and does their job. They give their 100% plus. They pitch in during the hard times and they help each other when the need arises. When this occurs, officer activity level rises and so do the statistics. Whether we like it or not, the police are evaluated partially on their criminal and traffic statistics. The excellent department pays attention to this while constantly seeking ways to improve on these figures.

2.2 Leadership

The police chief is the designer in the department who sets the vision, which becomes the design of the department. The chief has to set the example, and the attitude has to be from the top down. It is doubtful that one would find an excellent department where the direction of the department comes from the bottom up. Even though the entire chain of command must set the example and live the vision, it's the chief who is the catalyst for making it happen. As one executive said, "if the chief ain't for it, it ain't going anywhere." Another chief said that it was up to the chief to run the department; the department is not suppose to run the chief.

A strong leader is a must if an agency is going to be excellent. Circumstances may play a role on how the chief leads the troops towards excellence. The size of the community, budgetary constraints, or political atmosphere are all variables that can effect the operation, but in the end, the perception of the department will rest with the chief executive.

2.3 Missions and Goals

The excellent police department has prepared written mission statements and established goals and objectives. These missions and goals define the organization's contribution to society and the community, and relate goals and commitments to resources. Superior departments have both short and long-range goals and objectives. In the really good departments, both the employee and the community are involved in establishing the missions and goals. One can not forget that the police exist to serve the community; therefore, the community must have input towards the mission of the police. Once these missions and goals are established, the top-notch department will obtain the approval of both the City Manager and the city council before adoption. These missions and goals are published both internally and externally through the news media, annual reports, and/or pamphlets which are made available to the public.

Excellent police departments will be goal and objective oriented. This establishes a vehicle where-by the department can communicate what is really important in the department. It sets the tone for everyone to be preaching the same message. It gives one the style of policing the department will institute whether it is watchmen, legalistic, or service. Excellent departments will have strategic plans, and as one executive stated, "strategic planning is not an exercise, it's real, living, and changing. It's our business plan." It prepares the agency to meet tomorrow's challenges.

2.4 Values Are Clear

After conducting the interviews and reading numerous articles on excellence, it became very clear that the values of an organization played a major role in determining just how great a department might be. Funk and Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary defines values as "something regarded as desirable, worthy, or right, as a belief, standard, or moral precept." In Perry Pascarella's new book, The New Achievers, he says that it's up to the corporations to teach their values to the employees. Almost everyone interviewed said that not only must the police have proper and appropriate values, but these values are the pillars upon which the police department builds. They also agreed that these values are transmitted either formally or informally through the department by the example that is set by top management. As one executive said so clearly, "the department is the reflection of the chief, and if the chief does not live the proper values he/she wants in the department, those values will slowly fade away."

First impressions of a department are important. It is not uncommon for people to judge the values of the department by the community's perception of the police. The community looks toward the police to maintain the highest standards of conduct and moral integrity. As one chief said, "the police are not to push their morals on society as their role is only to help mold society." Excellence departments anticipate the future, and they plan their value systems to meet tomorrow's needs. Another executive related, however, that even though the police reflect the morals of society, the police values must survive the dips in society's values.

As stated earlier, in excellent departments, the vision comes from the top. It is the chief who sets the tone for the agency. It is up to the top command to establish the values of the department. This is not to say that the employee does not get a chance to have input, but the mode of what is really important comes from the top. The attitude of "do what I say and not what I do" just doesn't work. As one executive put it, the department must abide by laws and rules by which they expect the public to abide.

Even though every department's values may be slightly different, there appeared to be several common values that would be adhered to by any excellent department. These common values were honesty, absolute fairness, the "Golden Rule," openness, friendliness, loyalty, dignity and respect, looking good and being good, and having an attitude of "yes we can," which all boils down to being professional. A professional department was best described by one chief as follows:

A professional department is one that is:

- o educated, trained, and competent;
- o service oriented;
- o trying to make a friend of the community;
- o supportive towards the total law enforcement community, and their willingness to share with other police officers and departments;
- o visible in the community; and
- o highly sensitive towards integrity and honesty.

Without exception, all the executives believe that without honesty a police agency would not be excellent. Honesty was the basis of all other values (honesty with the public and with itself). Another basic value was practicing the "Golden Rule," and being fair to one another. Many departments had mottos of "Absolute Fairness," "Being Fair," and "Treat Others as Equal." It was the opinion of several executives that you could tell a lot about a department depending if they were friendly or rude to each other. If they were rude to each other, they were probably rude on the streets. One department even had a strict rule of "No No's." There was no lying, no gratuities and no ethnic slurs. The violation of any of these rules called for the employee's dismissal.

Another value that came across very clearly was that the excellent departments would look good and be good. As one chief said, "cops have to look sharp and be sharp." You have to look like a cop, be a cop, and remember your job is to serve the community. A good example of looking good was stated by a chief in the following question:

"If you came out of a hotel, and you had a choice of two taxi cabs, one neat, clean and shining, and the other dirty and dented, which one would you take?"

In many of the interviews, loyalty was mentioned as an important value. Loyalty is defined in the Funk and Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary as, "bearing true allegiance, being constant and faithful implying trust and confidence." Loyalty and support are just as important from the employees towards management as they are from management to the employees. As one chief says, "the way to get support is to give it, because loyalty begets loyalty." Another chief related a story he heard an old timer tell a new recruit:

"You can't get support if you screw up and if you don't screw up you don't need support. All support really is, is knowing that the man making decisions over you has walked in your shoes; and you know he will think about you before making any decisions that affect you."

There are many values in an organization. Many are similar regardless of the organization and some are unique to that particular organization. The values mentioned in this paper are only a few of those the executives interviewed thought would be present in any excellent agency. In addition to having the right values, the excellent organization will make sure that these values are shared throughout the department and the community. One of the ways the superior departments share these values is to have the proper attitude. In the really great departments, one would find that they want to be excellent and they are willing to go the extra step to achieve it. The message from the top is: We are, and will continue to be, excellent. As one chief says, "give them a fine reputation to live up to."

2.5 Innovation: A Way of Life

Encouraging employees to come up with new ways of doing things is standard operation in the really good police departments. It's been said that the police must become proactive and not reactive. As one chief said,

"we seem to be good firefighters, but we don't do a very good job of preventing the fires."

If a department desires to be a leader, then it must make opportunities for people to succeed. Excellent agencies encourage innovation. They are not satisfied with just getting by. They are future oriented, and they provide the mechanism for creativity. In John Naisbitt's book, Re-Inventing The Corporation, he states that innovation allows the employee to fulfill their entrepreneur spirit within the organization.

Employees are indoctrinated that the agency is constantly changing, and the department does everything it can to illustrate the benefits of this change to the employees. One way of doing this is to create an environment where risk taking is encouraged. The excellent departments are always working toward new directions. This does not mean they make change for change sake. As a matter of fact, the tone of the agency is if the program works, keep it; but, when it begins to fail, stop it; nothing is forever. One difference between an excellent agency and one that is not, is whether or not the organization creates a positive environment for change, or does the organization really say, "don't rock the boat."

Exceptional police departments know that being innovative encourages risk taking. Risk taking means the willingness to accept reasonable failures as well as successes. Management must share in the failures as well as the successes. Excellent agencies consider mistakes as learning experiences. They don't berate employees for failing, as long as it was a necessary risk. As a matter of fact they reward trying. The attitude is that they would rather have someone make an honest mistake for trying than make no mistake and do nothing. As one person said, "it's easier to ask for forgiveness than it is to ask for permission." In the really good departments, employees will always be working on something new and creative.

2.6 Taking Care of Employees

In order to have the best organization possible, one must have quality people and/or develop them, according to John Naisbitt in, Re-Inventing the Corporation. Naisbitt also says that the reason people come to work is to make money or give quality of service, have fun, and be around quality people. Without exception, everyone interviewed said that people (employees) were the most important ingredient in the police department. The excellent department views its employees as a valuable resource. They take care of their people. They don't just talk about it, they really do it.

The most important step in ensuring good quality people in the department is to recruit, select, promote, and assign the right person. As one executive said, "you have to get the right person to start with." Another executive says that success depends upon the employee you hire; that employee can determine the image of the department. It is obvious that recruiting, selecting, promoting, and assigning is important, but the excellent departments don't stop here. They make sure they do everything within their power to develop that employee's full potential.

Following right along with recruiting and selecting, the excellent department puts training as a top priority. They have established written

goals and objectives addressing their training needs. They go beyond the minimum required standards of training. They do everything within their power to get people the proper training and the best training available so that the employees can do the best job possible.

Superior departments treat their employees with respect. Management does not let their ego get in the way; they treat the police officer as the most important person in the department because he/she is the one that delivers the service. Excellent leaders delegate because they know employees need some control over their environment; they push the authority down as far as it will go. Good departments believe that the person doing the job should decide how to do it.

Excellent departments create an open communication atmosphere. They let employees know what's occurring. They don't hide problems, and they don't tolerate "yes" men. They don't discriminate or fabricate; they just treat people with the "Golden Rule." They treat their people like professionals.

Excellent departments are tough on discipline. They have recruited and selected the best people, they train them, they treat them right, and they expect them to abide by the values of the department. They even reward the employees for doing the right things. The standards in the excellent agencies are high, and when the standards are violated, disciplinary action is quick and efficient. Discipline becomes the last resort. First they try to improve the employee; then when discipline is in order, it comes as no surprise. As one chief says, "cops really do not want to make mistakes." Another chief said that discipline in an excellent organization would look as follows:

- The mission is understood,
- The style of delivery is acknowledged,
- The employee is well trained to do the job, and
- Punishment is not normal.

2.7 Close to the Community

In Peters and Waterman's book, In-Search of Excellence, they emphasized that the excellent companies stayed close to the customer. They gear their total output to serving the customer. Every person interviewed agreed that the police customer is the community, and the product is service. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Well, unfortunately, the communities of today are a mixture of people with different needs and wants. Circumstances may determine how effective the police are; however, regardless of the circumstances, the police have a responsibility to serve the community. Most people would agree that the make-up of the community can determine the resources available to the police. We know there are communities which are economically better off than others. We also know that different communities have different images; however, there are certain standards that apply to all agencies if they desire excellence in responding to the community's needs.

In order to do the best job the police can do, they need community support. Several of the executives interviewed mentioned that the police department should mirror the community, but one of the city managers said

it best, "the police must remember that they are working with the community and not for the community." This makes the job of policing everybody's business. It also forces the police to look at the total community and not just enforcing the law. It is important to remember that the police product is service, and that service must be the highest quality available.

Politics are a part of life in governmental services. The police are right on the firing line; whether we like it or not, the police are involved in the political realm. In the really good departments, the police recognize the political atmosphere and respond to the legitimate request of the politician, since the politician is suppose to represent his/her constituent (the customer). As several chiefs said, "the chief is involved in politics, but he doesn't play politics." It's a fine line to walk, but the good chief will know how to walk it. One way the excellent agency handle the political realm is to keep the politicians informed of what's happening. Most problems seem to occur because of poor communication.

In the better police agencies, they have an attitude of fix-it-now. They don't allow things to fester until they are major problems. These agencies take things head-on. They don't try to hide their problems and they are not afraid to let outsiders look in and see what's really happening. The excellent department is not always on the defensive, and they are willing to admit when they are wrong.

It was the opinion of those interviewed that the police can do all the right things, but if they don't satisfy the customer (the community, politicians, etc.), it would be difficult to be considered excellent.

2.8 Organizational Technologies: Planning For Success

Internally, the excellent police agency will do everything it can to communicate what's happening. After discussing the importance of communicating to everyone interviewed, it became apparant that if a police organization really had their "act together," they would be on top of all the latest techniques of organizational effectiveness.

The best police departments keep a lean staff, which allows the agency to be more flexible. With fewer ranks, each individual must have the ability to do several different functions. One chief said it was possible to have too much staff and not enough to do. With the old saying, "idle minds are the devil's workshop." An agency with not enough assignments to go around can become this workshop. As employees, we want to feel needed at work, and we want to be creative. As Naisbitt says in his book, Re-Inventing the Corporation, "people are aching to make a commitment. It is commitment, not authority, that produces results." Good departments will attempt to reduce the layers of management in order to increase communication and provide more opportunity for employee participation. Excellent agencies will have strong management teams, and they will include the sergeant as part of that team, both psychologically and spiritually. These departments will recognize that team members will need different skills, but common philosophy. Good teams radiate a lot of support and enthusiam.

These same departments will have the latest technology available in order to provide all the tools possible to their employees so that they can do the best job possible. However, the good departments will be just as strong in developing human relations, encouraging team building, and communicating with each other. The organizational attitude will be that they will do whatever possible to provide the best work place for their employees, while at the same time giving the best services possible to the community.

2.9 Summary

In this chapter, I have tried to describe what I perceive, from the interviews conducted, to be the eight major dimensions that have to be present before a police agency can achieve excellence. It is also apparent that excellence is doing all eight dimensions. These dimensions are all inter-related. It's a cause and effect relationship with all dimensions being equal in the relationship. Figure 2 represents these eight dimensions and their inter-relationship.

The next question may be, "How do we get there?" Chapter three explains what the people interviewed said about how one achieves excellence in the police community.

POLICE DIMENSIONS INTER-RELATIONSHIP

Dimensions of Excellence

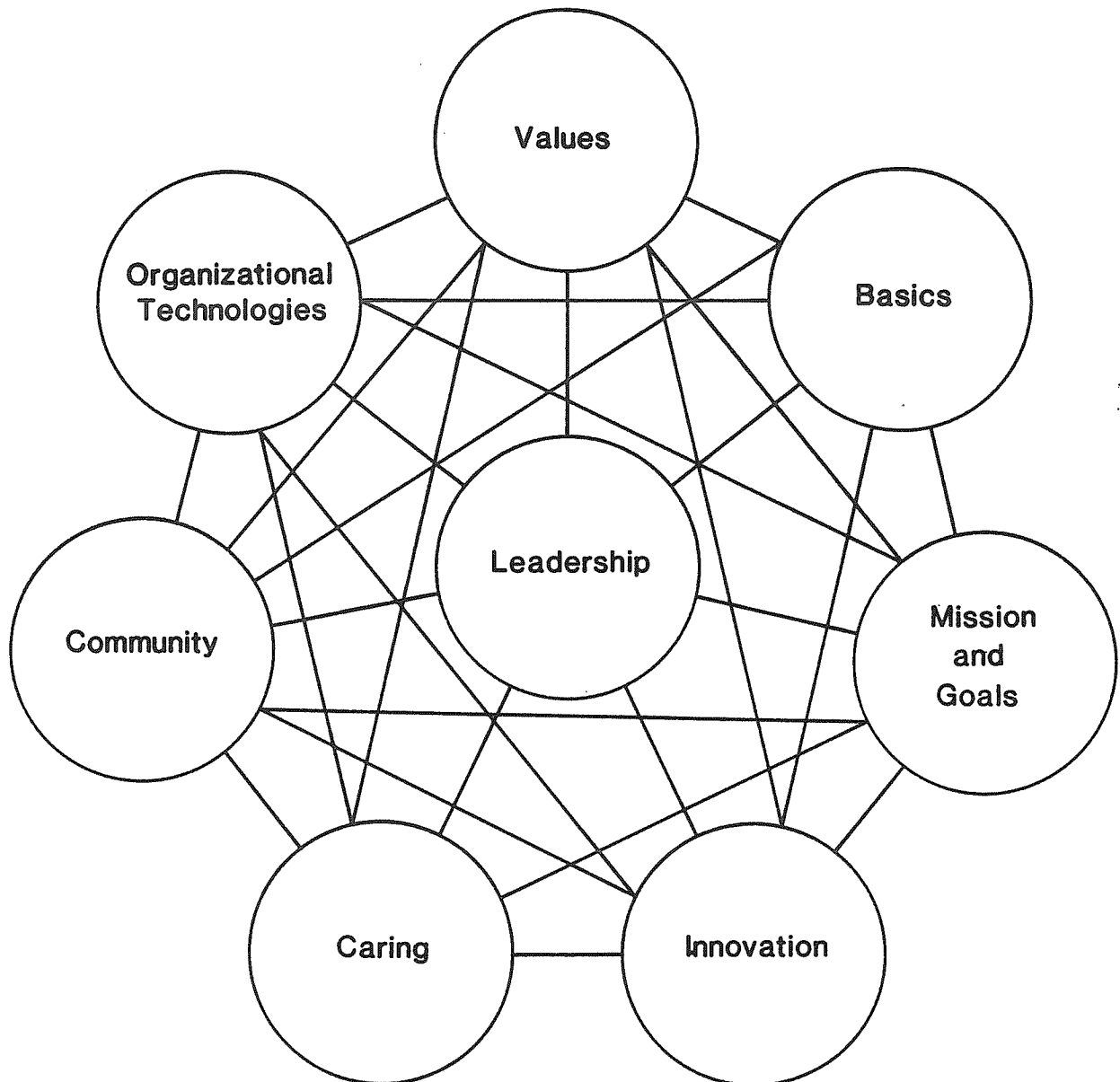


Figure 2

CHAPTER 3

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

In addition to discovering what attributes made a police department excellent, I was interested in finding out what departments can do to achieve excellence. This chapter describes what the executives interviewed had to say about what agencies can do to strive for excellence.

3.1 It's Up To The Leader

Thomas R. Horton, President of American Management Association, said in the July 1985 edition of Creative Management, "we have learned that we have to pay attention to a thousand mundane little things, yet plan for the long range; be entrepreneurial and innovative, yet stick to our knitting; be simultaneously loose and tight; and dress for success as we manage by wandering around -- while stopping periodically to stroke our people for sixty seconds."

Everyone interviewed said that the real success of an agency depends upon the leaders. The chief has more to do with leading an agency to excellence than any other dimension mentioned in this paper. This does not mean that the other dimensions of excellence fall to second place, but it does mean that the leader is the one who has to put it altogether. One of the chiefs interviewed said that people don't want to be led unless in time of crisis; therefore, the chief must possess all the skills necessary to motivate his/her people. And, as was discussed in the last chapter, it's the chief who provides the vision and sets the tone for the department.

After completing the interviews, no one leadership style seemed to surface in an excellent agency, but instead, today's style is situational leadership. The police culture is so complex that it takes a multitude of different approaches to manage a department.

Several of the executives interviewed stated that the chief executive must possess all the right leadership qualities, and there must be stability in the top management ranks. It takes time to make change and for people to buy into the values and principles of the leader. One chief said it takes at least 3-5 years to develop a department and 7-10 years to make it excellent, and if you keep changing managers you're always going to be starting over again. This same chief suggested if one wanted to check this theory out, all one would have to do is look to see if he could find a department that possessed all the qualities of excellence, but constantly was going through Chiefs of Police. He doubted you could find such a department.

Without a doubt, the chief leads by example. He has to radiate a positive attitude and enthusiasm towards his/her job. As one chief said, "if the chief grunts, so do the troops. When someone say it stinks, the chief has got to say its not so bad. People remember the grunts, not the smiles."

He must do everything possible to motivate positive and upbeat attitudes. Another executive related that examples set by the chief executive just naturally rub off on those under them. This executive related the story of a person, a non-drinker, who became the executive leader of a police department. Some of the top managers were known to abide in the "spirits" during lunch; however, after the new boss came on board, these managers began to follow the lead of their boss, and they too soon ceased indulging during lunch.

In the good departments, the chief will be doing everything possible to motivate the employees. As Tom Peters and Nancy Austin said in their book, A Passion for Excellence, the excellent leaders are not just administrators, but instead they become coaches and cheerleaders. That means they do things like delegate and encourage participation from all ranks. As one police chief said, "authority really bubbles up from the bottom. Those we lead give us the right to lead." The chief sets direction and then delegates as far down as he can go because he trusts his employees to do a good job. He has hired good people, given them the best training available, and leads others to success. He gives credit where credit is due and doesn't take all the glory for himself.

Everyone interviewed agreed that the chief has to be involved in the day to day operation of the department. Almost all of the executives stated that excellent chiefs do this by some means of what Peters and Waterman termed as Management by Wandering Around, coined as MBWA. There were many examples of how this was done. One chief made it a point to stop by on radio calls just to talk with the officers. In another department, the chief executive made it a point to drink coffee in the squad room with the officers so he could hear what was happening. Another chief felt that the top management should attend social affairs with the troops (formal affairs, not beer drinking events after work) in order to get to know the employee in a relaxed atmosphere. Even though, we have always heard that one can get too close to employees through off-duty friendship, one chief stated that over his 30 some years of experience he has never had an officer try to use this friendship to get himself out of a jam or into a prestigious position he was not qualified to fill.

When doing the interviews for this project, I heard of several ways that a Chief/Sheriff can stay aware of what's going on in the department while at the same time letting the troops hear what's happening from the top. These methods included spending lots of time with employees, managing by wandering around, if you would, and stopping and talking with the employees. The chief would show up at briefings, attend training exercises, and encourage social events. One of the chief executives felt that one of the most productive times he spends with his employees was at regular police picnics. This allowed the officers the chance to relax, and it gave the boss the opportunity to just sit and talk with the troops without it being a formal meeting. As he said, "this is when the troops really let you know what they're thinking, and they are more receptive to just let you share your thoughts for what they are, thoughts." Even though MBWA was encouraged by all the executives, one of them cautioned that not everyone was comfortable doing it. He even thought it might be inappropriate from some positions. For example, he cautioned that a City

Manager probably should not be doing MBWA in the police department. This same executive stated the MBWA is probably good as long as the chief is a good listener but would make corrections through the chain of command.

Another way the chief executive can share a personal message is by using video tapes. This allows the employees to hear the message from the chief himself. Several departments produce newsletters as one means of communicating, and in each case, the chief executive always had a column in this newsletter.

The excellent chiefs and sheriffs thoroughly love their job, and one can tell by the way they live. Their excitement radiates. During my travels, I met many chief executives who were excited about talking about the elements of an excellent police department. Many had all kinds of police reminders in their office, (pigs of all kinds, lots of police photos, police patches, badges, etc.). As one chief said, "Cop work just gets in your system." I was amazed at how many of the chief's children had followed in their dad's foot steps into the law enforcement field. It seems to be true that in order to generate enthusiasm in others, you have to love what your doing and be excited about being a cop.

3.2 Presenting The Right Image

Peters and Waterman in their book, In Search of Excellence, stated that every excellent company they studied was clear on what its' standards were and took the process of value shaping seriously. Their thesis on beliefs and values was so appropriate to the law enforcement culture that I believe it is worthwhile to quote it in its' entirety.

"I firmly believe that any organization, in order to survive and achieve success, must have a sound set of beliefs on which it premises all its policies and actions. Next, I believe that the most important single factor in corporate success is faithful adherence to those beliefs. And, finally, I believe if an organization is to meet the challenge of a changing world, it must be prepared to change everything about itself except those beliefs as it moves through corporate life. In other words, the basic philosophy, spirit, and drive of an organization have far more to do with its relative achievements than do technological or economic resources, organizational structure, innovation, and timing. All these things weigh heavily in success. But they are, I think, transcended by how strongly the people in the organization believe in its basic precepts and how faithfully they carry them out."⁵

As previously stated, the values and beliefs of the organization mold the department. The chief sets the example by establishing and upholding the basic principles of the organization, like being very clear that there is

⁵Peters, Thomas J., and Waterman, Jr. Robert H., In Search of Excellence, Warner Books, 1982, pp. 280.

no free cup of coffee. One of the executives interviewed stated, "that we go out and hire the person with good morale values; we must, therefore, make sure the organization affirms those values." We do this through not only written policy but practicing what we preach.

One chief I talked to was so convinced that proper values were important to the agency that he and all of his lieutenants and above went to Hewitt Packard's management training together for one week. When they returned, they decided to establish in writing their values and beliefs for the department. It took over seven months to finally agree upon the values and beliefs on which the department should base their existence. This chief now feels he is in position to guide his agency towards excellence.

Another chief stated that every organization has a history that helps to establish its values. He stated that before a new set of values is established, it is important to look at the history, the present, and the future. Values are the milestone of the organization. In several of the interviews, comments were made that before any major decisions are made or disciplinary action is taken, the department makes sure these decisions do not contradict the values and beliefs of the department. All decisions, actions, and progress should be consistent with the values of the organization.

The way the police handle people has a lot to say about the values of the agency. As mentioned before, one of the basic values of any agency is practicing the "Golden Rule". One way this value is impressed upon the employees is through constant preaching and mottos, such as August Volmer in Berkeley established the motto, "Kill them with kindness." It made no difference who the individual was or what he/she did, the police still had to treat them with kindness. Violation of this value was cause for disciplinary action. One chief said that there are times an officer may have to go to the gutter with an offender, but the difference between a good department and one which is not, is the good officer pulls himself backup from the gutter after regaining control, and the officer also brings the offender back up with him.

Another example of going one step further in practicing the "Golden Rule" is where an officer helped a handicap person home who had missed the bus. Not a big deal, one might say, and I might agree, but it's the little things that make the difference between being good and being excellent.

Excellent departments treat people with dignity and respect. One way they do this is by maintaining a liberal attitude in the way they handle people. They evaluate every situation individually, and they take the action that benefits all. Sure, they have established rules and procedures, but they maintain enough flexibility to personalize the action. These same agencies maintain a open, warm and hospitable atmosphere. They do not allow derogatory language in or outside the agency, and they maintain fairness to everyone regardless of race, sex, religion, or nationality.

Excellence is attitudinal. The chief must reinforce the attitude he wants. One department believes so strongly in abiding by the best human relations principles possible that they send every officer through the Dale Carnegie Human Relations Course, a commitment of approximately \$700 per

employee. This commitment tells the employees that being able to get along with others is taken seriously.

Loyalty was a value that the executives said was important in an agency. The chief needs loyalty from his key people, and the best way to get loyalty is to give it. As one chief said, "if the chief talks bad about someone, that person will talk bad about him." Sometimes when you give loyalty and trust one might get stabbed in the back, but in the long run, the chief will gain more loyalty and trust from the employee. As previously stated, loyalty begets loyalty.

The excellent departments do everything they can to emphasize what's important because troop preception of what's important is by what the department does not by what it says. In the excellent agencies, the leaders show the way by leading and setting the example. They do things like emphasizing that the most important function of the department is to provide twenty-four hour service to the public. The patrol operation is number one priority and all other services are a support service to patrol.

One department I visited had a program that emhasized the importance of health. They have a sick leave bonus that pays \$50.00 a month if the employee has not used any sick leave for a year and half. In addition, the employee gets his/her name on a plaque that is hung in the lobby. This same agency also provides a \$250.00 bonus every six months for two years if the employee quits smoking and/or if over-weight, losses and maintains his/her ideal weight.

The chief must personally do what ever he can to make sure the employees know and understand the departments values and beliefs. One way the chief does this is by spending time with the employees, especially new recruits who are most receptive to the departments values and beliefs.

As one chief said, one of the best ways to ensure the employee will accept the department's values is by hiring the employee who already posesses these values. In this agency, the chief gets the oral board members, background investigators, and psychologist together so that they will all agree upon what values and beliefs they are looking for in a new employee. Several of the chief executives agreed that it is important for the FTOs⁶ to teach the proper values to new recruits; therefore, the chief must spend time with the FTOs sharing the department's values and beliefs.

In one department they have a program called the "unsung hero." Every month the staff chooses an employee as the employee of the month. The criteria for being chosen is not just because they have done something outstanding that month, but it's for being a good consistent employee. This individual receives a plaque and is provided with a special parking place for a month. In another agency, the chief has a standing monthly meeting with the president of the police association, who may ask any pertinent questions. The process is video recorded so that all officers can view the interview. This gives the chief the opportunity to express what he feels are the true values of the department.

⁶Field Training Officers.

Other methods of communicating the values of the department is by attending briefings, maintaining a chief's bulletin board in the squad room and holding weekly staff meetings. One chief holds morning staff meetings for one-half hour with all lieutenants and above so that everyone knows what occurred over the last 24 hours and the direction for the next 24 hours.

Several of the executives stated that two important areas of value portrayal are the budget process and meet and confer times. The budget process establishes the resources to accomplish the important mission. The meet and confer issue is important to the organization's effectiveness. The chief must support the efforts of the employees while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the organization. The overriding issue must be, is it fair to everyone, which is one of the common values of the organization. As one chief stated, the chief needs to be involved in the meet and confer issues that effect the departments beliefs and mission. The chief should stay out of the issues not effecting the operation of the department.

I came away from many of the interviews realizing that several of the departments had mottos that exalted excellence, just like the Los Angeles Raiders new motto, "Commitment of Excellence." These agencies have mottos like "excellence, style, and pride; absolute fairness; respect; be fair; to serve and protect; we will achieve and we are striving for excellence." These same departments also had heroes that they emulated, like August Volmer, O.W. Wilson, and past and present employees.

Values and beliefs are important in the excellent agencies, and the excellent departments do everything within their power to not only establish the right values, but to up hold them.

3.3 They Have A Mission And Goals

Excellent departments will have written and published mission statements. They will have established goals and they will be driven by objectives. In other words, these agencies will use some sort of management by objective. These goals will be established through employee participation and once agreed upon, everyone will know what part they play in accomplishing the objectives.

I was in one department where they have a complete mission binder which was established by using the 8 attributes from the book, In Search of Excellence. This book explains the philosophy of the department, and it is used when indoctrinating new employees and in-service training. It is constantly updated and is used to evaluate the performance of the department. In another department, the total investigative unit establishes objectives. These objectives are published, and the section leader quarterly reports the units' progress to the chief. If the unit does not meet the objectives then the chief wants to know why.

The department's mission does not necessarily have to be any earth shaking statement. As one consultant related that in one department he was working with, the question was asked of the chief what the department's mission was. The chiefs' response was that it was our job to get out there

and put the bad guys in jail. Simplistic! Yes, but the experts agreed that the best way to state the goals and objectives was to keep it simple.

If establishing mission and goals is important, so is getting a buy-in from the employees. They get this buy-in by practicing management by participation. Several agencies have yearly retreats during which they establish the yearly objectives. Almost everyone related that the best way to impress the importance of mission, goals, and objectives is through training, especially with new recruits.

The mission and goals of the police agency must coincide or at least not be in conflict with the overall city's missions and goals. The best example is in one city all new recruits participate in a city wide orientation. The recruit actually spends a day with every city department, which allows him to get a clear view of the total city's mission. As the executive related, "it's easier to show the right way at the start than try to unlearn bad habits or misperceptions."

3.4 Details/Details/Details

It became quickly obvious that the good police departments take care of the basics. They pay attention to details. As one chief said, "the excellent police departments emphasize doing the basics well. The answering of the radio calls is the all important function of the police; everything else is gravy." Excellent departments do things right the first time. The way they do this is they don't accept work that does not meet the agreed upon standards. They reward the small, but important things.

Excellent agencies are always trying to improve. They build foundations for getting better. They train the officer to do things right the first time, and they evaluate their successes while searching for possible improvements. One chief explained that agencies endeavor to make all contacts positive. They shouldn't get hung up with the negatives. He gave the example of reviewing police reports. Instead of always blasting the mistakes, we should praise the good parts of the report and get the officers to want to improve so they will be proud of their work.

Even though everyone interviewed said that good statistics are a gauge by which one could evaluate a department, one must be cautious when deciphering this information as it may not always be what it seems. One executive related an example of the problems with taking statistics at face value. As a young cop, this executive, working a very busy neighborhood wrote lots of theft reports until his sergeant told him that crime was too high in his beat so he must not be doing his job. The sergeant suggested that instead of classifying the reports as theft, lost property would be more appropriate. Crime dropped in the young cops beat. This executive was sure this type of action wouldn't occur in an excellent agency.

Several of the executives stressed that excellent agencies would constantly be looking at how they do things. They would remember, however, that the old ways may still be the best. As one chief said, "It's hard to improve on beat accountability." They fix things that need fixing, but they don't try to fix things that are not broken. Excellent agencies impress the officers with being responsible to the community and especially the people on their respective beats.

One variable that can effect excellence is the size of the agency. Even though a particular size may not be a variable in whether or not an agency can become excellent, having enough resources to get the job done is. It was the consensus of the people interviewed, the organization has a duty to maintain sufficient staffing.

3.5 They Take Care of Their People?

3.5.1 Recruit/Select/Assign and Promote

Naisbitt says in Re-Inventing the Corporations, that the organization must have quality people and/or develop them. As previously mentioned, maybe the most important role of the leader is who is appointed, promoted, and transferred. Several of the executives interviewed said you must have competent people under you if you want to develop an excellent organization.

Several of the executives were adamant that if you're going to strive for excellence in your organization, you have to hire people who can meet the needs and are willing to serve the community. This means that the agency must actively be involved in the recruitment and selection process. They don't leave it to the personnel department. High standards are set for becoming a police officer. In one department, one must have an AA degree to get hired, and a BA to get promoted. Another chief, however, said one of the biggest stumbling blocks in the personnel system is the lowering of the requirement for entry. In the earlier days, in this chief's department, one had to maintain a "B" average in school to get hired; now, he says, some departments are lucky if the individual has graduated from high school. What was amazing, however, was the chief still felt one could recruit the "cream of the crop." It just took more work.

One way the department can attempt to get the good recruit is for the chief to get involved right at the start. In the superior departments, the chief personally interviews the candidate prior to doing the background investigation. As one chief said, "Why should I leave the selection process up to someone else? If I know I don't want the individual, why do a background investigation?" These same agencies impress upon their background investigators the importance of hiring the right people, and they require a thorough background. They get their investigator, psychologist, and polygraph operator to agree upon the type of employee the department is seeking. They try to get out the anti-social people before they are hired.

The new police recruit comes into the job wanting to do good, and the department must create an atmosphere for him to do a meaningful job. As Naisbitt said, "In their hearts, people know that work should be fun and that it should be related to the other parts of their lives."⁷ One chief related that if for some reason an employee does not match the organization, then the agency must help that employee to go elsewhere. We need to get the employee doing what makes him happy.

⁷Naisbitt, John and Aburdene, Patricia, Re-Inventing the Corporation, Warner Book, N.Y., 1985, pp. 5.

Besides the hiring and training of the new employee, assignments and promotions are taken seriously in the excellent department. The chief will personally be involved. Several of the executives stated that besides hiring and assigning of police officers, there are two other very important positions; dispatch and the public counter people. The dispatch person is usually the first contact the public has with the police. How that person is treated by the dispatcher can set the tone for the total police contact. As one chief said, "the dispatcher has to possess both technical and human relations skills." Technically, dispatch is becoming very hi-tech oriented. We have to hire people with the necessary skills to handle this function, but they also must use numerous people skills perhaps more than the police officer since practically all of the interaction with the public is over the phone. One executive advised that the dispatcher is a very important person in the organization since he/she has total control over the city's resources. Usually, it is the dispatcher who makes the split second decisions as to who, what, and how many resources are going to be committed to the call. Another chief personally selects the public counter people because as he related they are the first personal contact the public has with the police when they enter the facility. He wants a favorable reception. In this department, being selected to serve as a public counter receptionist is a real honor.

Excellent departments promote only the best people. Everyone interviewed said that promoting the right person is an absolute necessity if you are going to achieve excellence. As one chief said, "A person gets promoted on what he does, not just on the test score--attitude counts." Departmental values are represented in a promotion. The troops will see what's really important by who gets promoted. If it's the hard worker who upholds the department's values, then that's what rest of the troops will do to get promoted. If it's just on the test score, then who knows how the employee will act between tests. And, once the individual is promoted, the chief's job is not over. Several executives related that on any promotion the chief needs to spend lots of time with the new promotee sharing the values of the department.

There probably are not going to be enough positions available for everyone to get promoted. The excellent departments take care of these people who don't get promoted by creating a career development program to reward the faithful employee who has not moved up. In one department, they have created the career officer. After several years as a police officer, the officer becomes available to be a career officer. He wears a distinguished badge and uniform, and receives monetary and training incentives. The city really does appreciate the officer's efforts and is not just trying to appease the employees.

3.5.2 They Care About Their People

Excellent departments create excellent people because they know the employee, if happy, will take care of the organization. The better departments create a work environment that's appealing. They provide coffee rooms for the employee (a place to relax) and they allow the employee freedom to make it comfortable, establish the rules, and feel

free to talk in there. They provide the employee with their own work space and give them the freedom to decorate it in their own way. They treat people as responsible adults and they get responsible employees.

If there is a problem in a gray area, the employee is given the advantage. If there are little irritants that makes little difference to the organization, the excellent agencies let the employees decide, like the color of the patrol car. They have some ground rules with lots of flexibility.

Excellent police departments don't discriminate, fabricate, or mistreat their people. They treat employees with respect and the chief and/or top management does not let ego get in the way. They lead by being a supporter, helper, coach, and cheerleader. The chief has to show that he/she cares about the employee's welfare. One chief responds to every officer injury regardless of the seriousness or time of day. Does this help? This chief seemed to think so. He related that he had an officer who lost an eye in a shooting. The city wanted to retire him; however, the officer did not want to retire. The chief fought for his job. That officers is back to work. As this chief said, "I'm in awe of guys who do this." Does this send a message to the troops? You bet it does.

Another factor that shows the agency cares for its people is if the chief gets to know his employees. One chief related that when he first became chief, he spent 4 to 5 hours with every employee just trying to get to know them. He felt it was the best time he spent because when making decisions he usually knew where his employees were coming from because he had asked them. This chief felt it was so important that he continued these lengthy interviews with the new employee as they were hired.

3.5.3 Open Communications And Trust

Excellent departments allow their people to express their feelings. They don't give them carte blanche, but they do say I hear, I respect the difference, but this is what we will do and why. Under most conditions, the excellent agency will keep the department informed and will do such far enough in advance of any events that will effect the department. There will be little after the fact explaining. Excellent organizations will minimize the formal lines of communications. They won't uproot the chain of command, but they will encourage sharing of information regardless of the rank or organizational structure. These agencies find ways to communicate. One agency had a hot-line video response system whereby at any time any employee could see what was really happening instead of depending upon rumors and/or unreliable sources. Another agency has an electronic memo system where every officer can use a computer terminal to receive the latest information and messages. The officer could transmit and ask questions or clarification through this same terminal. One chief said that you need an open door policy, but this is not as good as going to the employees work station.

An excellent agency would not hide problems or tolerate "yes men." Instead, it would develop methods to build trust.

One chief says that one thing he always does is he tells others why he will or will not do something. Another chief said one of the ways he began

to develop trust was he had a meeting with all of his staff and asked three questions: 1) What do you like about the department? 2) What don't you like? and, 3) What would you change? These responses then become the agenda for the coming staff meetings until they were rectified or at least satisfied with the process. Another chief said that his staff always airs out matters before any decision is made unless an emergency, and if it is truly an emergency, then the decision is always discussed as to why it had to be made as it was, and was it the right decision.

Another way to develop trust is to get others involved in the decision making of the department. One chief brought all of his sergeants together and let them work out how they were going to reduce the citizen complaints. This same chief even had a Team Building Workshop which included officer's wives.

3.5.4 Rewards

Almost every one interviewed indicated that some how the excellent department would get the employee to feel that he/she has some responsibility for the overall accomplishments of the department. One way this can be addressed is through a feeling of ownership. Make the employee feel that he/she has an invested interest in the organization. One department that I visited has a take home car plan. Each officer is assigned a particular vehicle and it is his/her's to drive off-duty as well as on-duty. I never saw cleaner looking patrol cars, but the real message of this plan is it is telling the officers we trust you. We trust you completely to the point that we are going to give you the privilege of having a city car to use just like we have done for management for years.

We have to treat others as winners and call ourselves winners. People do good work because we train them to do it. All they need is a pat on the back. As the One Minute Manager said, "find them doing something right." One chief related, however, that the chief can't do this unless the sergeant tells him of the good job the men are doing. This same chief said, "the way you get the sergeant to tell you of the good police work is reward the sergeant for telling you."

As a leader, we feel best when we can stroke others. Few leaders really like to administer negative discipline. We also know that stroking begets stroking. We all like to receive a compliment, but we really feel better when we can give them. On the negative side, however, one chief said the best way to ensure compliance with the rules is make it so uncomfortable for the employee violating the rules that they will want to do it right. Excellent agencies reward for good conduct, but they also discipline for bad conduct.

All of the executives interviewed agreed that not only is rewarding good conduct important, but the excellent agencies made big deals out of these rewards. It became an event the employee looked forward to with great anticipation. In one agency, the officer of the year award is presented on the front lawn of City Hall. Last year over 350 citizens in the community attended. It is a big deal and the agency treats it as such. In another agency, officers are rewarded for doing things outside their normal duties, like writing an article for a magazine. The chief awards a small lapel

badge. These badges are not easily given. When the officer receives one, he/she knows it was for something special.

Yes, rewards, recognition, and "at-a-boys" are important, and in the excellent department, the chief is the head cheerleader, cheering the employees on for even more rewards. That chief knows the more rewards received, the better the department is becoming. These rewards are not just for any old thing; they're for performing in an excellent manner.

3.5.5 Police Unions

Practically everyone interviewed stated that the police unions might be the greatest stumbling block to an agency desiring excellence. As Robert Townsend mentioned in his book, Further Up the Organization, unions have become the theory x manager -- they say "management is no damn good". Like it or not, it appears that the police associations or unions are here to stay for awhile at least. The advice from the executives was to accept the unions and work with them. As Robert Neville in a CareerTrack conference in Sacramento on Achieving Excellence said, "The way you have of taking care of employees better than the unions is recognition." Unions usually make decisions by seniority and past practices.

If unions are part of the police culture, then how does the excellent agency handle them? When I asked this question the most common response was negotiation was the key in dealing with the POA.⁸ The chief can't be at war with the association. The chief must create a climate of trust and openness with the POA. This does not mean that the chief roles over. As one chief said, "if the POA is wrong, go to the mat, but if your wrong, admit it quickly and correct it." Another executive related that one system he saw of dealing with the association was the chief and the president of the association met monthly to discuss departmental problems, up coming events, and possible ways of doing things even better. This created a feeling of trust and cooperation instead of a them/us atmosphere.

The most beneficial information I received concerning unions was relayed to me by a chief who thought that associations should:

- Recognize their role in the organization,
- Represent the interest issues of the group,
- Represent the agreed upon support of the MOU,⁹ and
- Provide positive influence for the good of the organization and not individual needs.

The chief did caution that the more militant the association, the less likelihood they will be influenced by positive leaders. It is important to create a positive relationship with the POAs.

⁸Police Officers Association.

⁹Memorandum of Understanding.

3.5.6 Training

Excellent departments train their people to be competent. They are truly committed to training. As one executive said, "you train more than just the technical aspects of the job, you encourage training outside the department." One department takes this so seriously that it brought the college to the police department. The department provided space to hold classes. They didn't just limit these classes to police employees, but they opened it up to the public. By doing this, the department sends the message to the employee that the agency feels so strongly about training that they are doing all they can to provide the educational opportunity to the employee. It seems to me it would be difficult to decline taking part in this opportunity.

Another agency feels that training is so important that they have a three year contract with a trainer to establish a long range training plan. Another chief makes sure he attends a portion of all department training in order for the troops to realize that he considers training important.

Almost everyone will agree training is important. In the excellent departments they do more than talk about training, they do it and a lot of it.

3.5.7 Discipline

In the excellent department, they do all they can to hire the right people, train them, and motivate them to do good. However, even in the good departments, disciplinary problems arise. When this occurs, the experts say it will be handled quickly, efficiently, and without procedural flaws. There will be no inconsistencies in the policy or the ways it is enforced. The rules are rigid but fair. The message is if you "screw up" you will be disciplined, and if they mess up, they are disciplined. Nothing is worse than have someone violate the rules and not take action. You can't look the other way no matter what the circumstances. Discipline is handled with compassion and understanding of the circumstance, but if rules are violated some sort of action has to be taken. We have told the employee we will, and we must. In excellent departments, once the disciplinary action is administered, and if the employee "flys right," then he/she is pardoned. Excellent departments do not hold grudges against employees; they are just looking for people to comply with the policy.

The better departments push the disciplinary action down as far as it will go, but they let them know that the upper ranks are watching. As one chief said, "poor handling of discipline can effect one's career. If we expect our supervisors to take care of misbehavior then we have to hold them responsible." The word in this department is they want the supervisor to correct the problem before it becomes some sort of disciplinary action. Another chief said that in the excellent agencies disciplinary action would not be normal. These departments would be controlling misbehavior before it becomes a major problem.

Many of the people interviewed agreed that compliance to the rules of the organization are controlled through daily methods. One department believes

it is better to handle problems in the performance track than the disciplinary track. They give monthly evaluations to every employee, and a formal evaluation every six months. They do not consider any disciplinary action on the performance evaluation unless the problem shows up on the six month formal evaluation. Another chief said that you have to tell the employees what is expected of them then failure to abide by the rules will show in their evaluation. These departments use these evaluation when considering pay raises, assignments, and especially promotions. Excellent departments will have good evaluation systems. All of the executives said that problems must be corrected immediately. One chief said, "when you hear of a problem it becomes top priority and must be handled now." The longer one waits the less important it becomes and slowly the values of the department begins to fade.

Several of the executives said that a good department will have a lack of citizen complaints, but when they do receive one it is taken seriously. The internal investigation procedure must be designed to get to the truth. It is neither for or against the officer or the citizen. As one chief said, "the only job of the Internal Affair Unit is to tell the chief what happened. It is up to the chief to make the decision." One chief requires that the officer involved must have read and initialed every page in the I.A.¹⁰ report with the opportunity to respond to any item before the chief will even read it.

Probably the best advice offered from the executives interviewed was when making the rules, the excellent department will get everyone involved in setting the standards. The department will train the people the right way to do the job, and when violations occur, the peer pressure will either force the violator to conform or they will report the actions to the supervisor. Officers don't want to make mistakes, but now and then someone may have to have their wheels put back on the track. Discipline becomes the last sort of sanction in the excellent department. First the management tries to improve the offender. Then, when discipline does come there is no surprise.

3.6 There Is Always Something Going On

Excellent agencies are on the leading edge of change, and they are always trying to improve. They have the ability to act because they encourage risk taking which allows one to be innovative.

Excellent organizations encourage entrepreneur actions upon the part of the employee. They do this by allowing people the opportunity to fail because they look at failure as a learning experience. These agencies reward trying. They would rather have someone make an honest mistake for trying than make no mistake and do nothing. These departments get the elected bodies to realize that any experiment may fail. Excellent departments are willing to admit that they don't know all the answers. Instead, they get people to feel that it is ok to not know the answer, and it is ok to ask the boss for help.

¹⁰Internal Affairs.

It was really exciting to listen to some of the innovative things going on in the police world. Every person interviewed believed strongly about being innovative and they were enthusiastic in sharing examples of innovative programs. In today's world of hi-tech, numerous innovative programs are available by using computers. The good police departments use the computer for all it's worth. One agency computerized all of it's F.I's¹¹ even when the courts were questioning the legality of keeping this kind of information. As the chief said, "I would rather have to purge the information, then not to have tried at all." This same department setup a bar and grill sting operation. It was so successful it made national news. In another department, they have developed a game plan of repressible crimes.¹² They play this game just like Monday night football. They keep a daily track record comparing it to the same day last year. On a monthly basis they would have a win, loss, or tie. They even gave special recognition to good arrest, etc., just as if they had made a touch down or a key play. The council and city manager are kept abreast of the game. Effective? This city has reduced repressible crimes by some 30 percent.

In another city, the council has authorized a cash award of \$3,000 for the employee who comes up with a plan to help solve the graffiti problem caused by several youth gangs in town. No one has come up with a solution as yet, but I found it very interesting that the city solicits employees to come up with innovative ideas. In another city, they have civilian investigators working along side the sworn cop. The civilian does the mundane work and then they turn the case over to the detective for final investigation. They have increased the solvability of their crimes by 40 percent.

Excellent departments try to be ahead of what the future will bring. One city adopted the Police Officer's Bill of Rights before it was signed into law. As the chief said, "it was obvious that it was coming so why not make it departmental policy. It's really fair to the officer, and if the department is performing proper internal investigations it is not going to cause any major problems."

Another agency had a very interesting program. Anytime an employee wants to visit another department to look at a program, he/she gets to go on city time. All the employee has to do is share with the department what they find. Another city had a really new program. That city developed a program called "Innovative Project." It is a city wide committee developed to look into the future. They selected four cities to visit and see what they do well. The police chief of this city is excited about this program as he sees it as a way to create new thoughts about how others do things.

Innovation is important to the excellent police departments. They do what ever they can to stimulate ideas. One chief mentioned that a simple way to stimulate ideas is to have a rotation policy. This allows the employee to get a real insight to the whole picture which is more apt to open the employee to being innovative. We all have a little different view of how to do things.

¹¹Field Interview Cards.

¹²The repressible crimes identified by this department were robbery, burglary, car theft, theft, and malicious mischief.

3.7 Being Responsive To The Community

The community is the police customer. Some departments do not have positive relationships with the community. As one executive said, "Ask, what would happen if we didn't have the perception problem from the community, and how do we change it?" The excellent departments ask this question and they attempt to change any negative perception and build on their positive features. How? Hopefully, this section will give one some ideas how the excellent departments perceive their role in the political ring.

First, the better departments realize that service to the public is the police product; therefore, the police must listen to what the public wants. Agencies can do this through many means. One of the most common ways reported was constantly surveying the community on how they felt about the department. They send out follow-up letters to see how the community rates their services. They listen for feed back through numerous means, be it news media, schools, clubs, chamber of commerce, council, citizen complaints, or any number of ways. One chief said, "one of the best methods of finding out how the community perceived the services of the department is to listen to the detectives." Since a detective usually does follow-ups after the fact, most citizens are calm when the the detective makes his/her interview. The citizen is usually more willing to express his satisfaction or dissatisfaction to the detective.

Most of the people interviewed stated that the department needs support from City Hall. Excellent departments obtain this support in a number of ways. They do the little things right like treating people properly. They keep the politician informed. They don't try to up stage the elected official or the city manager. As one executive said, "the chief has to be involved in the political ring, but he/she does not move out in front of the city manager or the council." Another chief mentioned that the best way to keep rapport with the city council is to always sell the council to the public. When asked about a program, the excellent chief will always let others know that it was the council who let the police do one of the options presented to the council. Another executive stated that it was really important that if there was a disagreement between the chief executive and the effected bodies, the arguments were never done in public. It's important for everyone to save face. Another chief said that the chief and the police should not pose a threat to the elected official, they must remember it is their job to protect the city not play politics. This means that the chief does a lot of work behind the scene letting the politician take the glory. Good publicity is important for a police agency, but unfortunately, too many chiefs seem to gauge how successful they are by how much publicity they get. The police are here to be respected. If they are doing a good job, the good publicity will follow. Excellent departments are always trying to improve their public image.

Excellent agencies stay close to the community encouraging community involvement. Officers are encouraged to join clubs, be on boards of directors, members of committees, and involved in other community activities. The departments reward their officers for volunteering to serve the community above and beyond their police duties. In one city, this has become so important that many officers drive back into town on their own time to serve the community. This commitment is taken into

consideration when considering promotions and assignments. These same departments are also doing all they can to recruit volunteers into the police department, both as reserve police officers and civilian volunteers. The excellent departments will constantly be asking the community for help. When a problem arises, the police won't always take the defensive. If there is no answer for the problem, they will say so and ask the community for help. As one chief related, they were having a drug problem in a particular neighborhood, and they couldn't seem to solve it. They asked the neighborhood for help. The neighbors began a neighborhood watch program educating the neighborhood on drug awareness. These people then set up a crime watch system reporting to the police when they observe any suspicious activity. Soon the problem disappeared from the street corners. Not only did it solve an immediate problem, but it established a rapport between the police and the people.

In another agency, they established walking residential beats. The cops on the beat became responsible for handling any and all neighborhood problems. If the police couldn't do it themselves, they took on the responsibility of making sure the responsible agency corrected the problem. Many agencies have opened store front police stations to bring the police and community closer together. Most of the experts interviewed mentioned that it was important for the cop on the beat to stay close to the people they serve. One chief took this so seriously, that all neighborhood watch meetings are attended by the beat officer. As the chief said, "Who else is better at knowing what's really happening on the beat and what assistance they need from the people than the beat cop?"

The bottom line is how the community perceives the effectiveness of the police. Do they feel safe? Can they walk the streets at night? When they call the police, do they receive quick, efficient, and polite services? The excellent police departments do whatever they can to make the citizen feel safe. One city even has as an objective to have a patrol car pass any point in the community every fifteen minutes. They keep their patrol cars black and white because traditionally people respond to this color as representing the police. They keep as many people as they can in uniform (including staff) so that the community can readily identify the police.

The demographics of the community can have an impact on how good a police department can become. The department has to be sensitive to the request of the community, but they must maintain law and order. It is important that the police take an active role in community affairs. One agency developed a communications committee made up of different cultural backgrounds of officers. They listen to this committee for advice on how to serve appropriate ethnic groups in the community. In addition, they use this committee as a liaison between the police and the different cultural groups.

Lastly, this report is mostly generated toward a police department instead of a sheriff's office. Even though most of what is presented in this section applies to both the police and the sheriff. The sheriff is a political being by the nature of his position. In the second part of the study, it is suggested that POST investigate to see if the political ring really is different between the police chief and the sheriff.

3.8 Putting It All Together

As this chapter has presented, it takes an agency doing a lot of things to be considered excellent all of which is inter-related. I am convinced that the excellent agencies will be addressing everything presented in this chapter. Hard work? You bet! The diagram, following this page, is a model representing all of the different variables that must be addressed if a police agency desires to achieve excellence. I have identified the diagram as the critical mass as it represents the attributes and stakeholders that are present in any police agency. It's not a matter of the variables being present that determines the quality of the police agency. It's how the department reacts to the critical mass that decides excellence. All of the variables are important, and I, as one, would not want to establish any priority. I truly believe you have to do all of them.

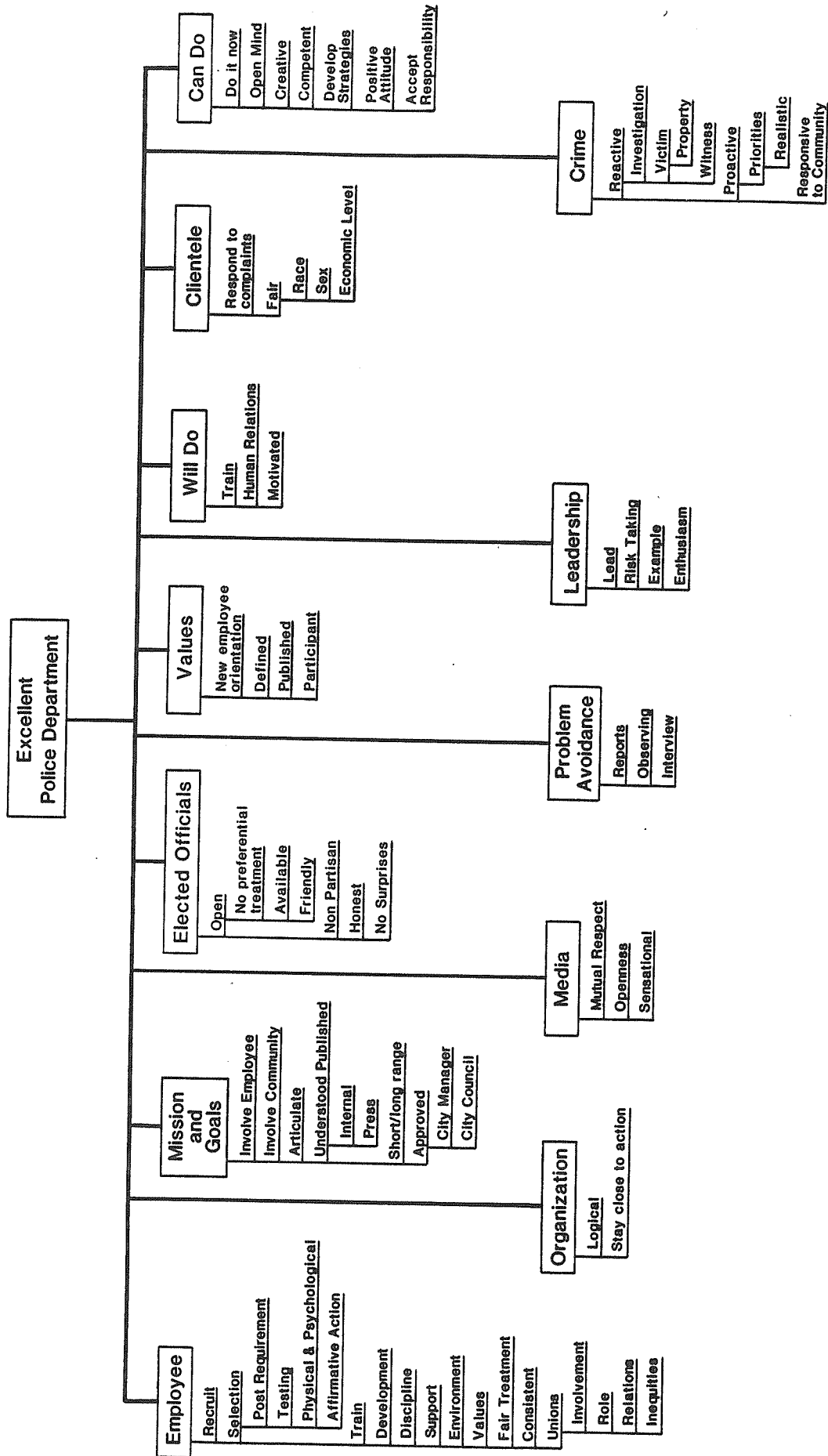


Figure 3: Critical Mass

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This project is not a scientific study, but a compilation of opinions and examples given by highly respected police administrators. The method used to gather this information is an art not a science. There are many intangibles qualities that make an agency excellent. In the end, our perception of excellence may be all there is. The police must satisfy the customer and the community. Excellence is providing superior quality and service to the community.

I did not attempt to identify any excellent police agencies in this study. My preliminary observation is that there are a lot of really good departments. Even though excellence may not yet be attained, they are constantly achieving higher goals. It is the intent of POST to conduct further research to identify excellent law enforcement agencies by using the findings of this project as a guideline.

Even though I was not looking for the excellent police department, I did hear about and see examples of excellence in numerous police agencies. Unfortunately, I was unable to spend a great deal of time in any particular police agency; therefore, most examples were accepted without verification.

An important conclusion to be drawn from this project is the excellent police departments are always seeking to become even better. They do not allow themselves to think they have reached the top; because reaching the top can mean falling off. They are always striving for new goals.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this project is that an excellent agency must perform all eight dimensions; not seven of eight. Once again, the eight dimensions that I identified are:

- o Doing the Basics Right
- o Leadership
- o Missions and Goals
- o Values
- o Innovation
- o Taking Care of Employees
- o Close to the Community
- o Organizational Technologies

The most obvious conclusion was that there was no magic formula to be followed. No special training or equipment was needed. The necessary elements were so simple and obvious that they were almost embarrassing. Any department that wished to attain excellence could do so.

This is not to insinuate that I have found the answers to achieving excellence in law enforcement, for such a claim would be foolish. There may be no right or wrong approach to achieving excellence. I do believe the findings make

sense, and I offer the report for contemplation. I suggest it become the basis for achieving excellence. I believe that continuing research and analysis of excellence in law enforcement is necessary. Let's use the dimensions in this paper as the starting point for another project to see if we can find the excellent police departments in California. If from this research the dimensions hold true, then let us use them to prepare agencies to achieve excellence.

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